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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 005383

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR G, OES, OES/GC, EUR, EUR/PPD, EUR/PRA, EUR/WE;  
WHITE HOUSE FOR CEQ (CONNAUGHTON); DOE FOR OFFICE OF  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY (CLIMATE CHANGE TECHNOLOGY  
PROGRAM); DOT AND EPA FOR INTL AFFAIRS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [KPAO](#) [TRGY](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: FRANCE TAKES NOTE OF ASIA-PACIFIC CLEAN  
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP: MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

1. (SBU) Summary: Deputy Secretary Zoellick's announcement of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development caught France's attention, and helped sustain a slight but perceptible moderation in French criticism of the U.S. climate change position. Some of the economic press has reported on the benefits and logic of the new technologies in finding a solution to this global problem. Unfortunately, general public opinion, as indicated in recent mainstream papers, has not softened, and the U.S. non-accession to the Kyoto Protocol remains one of our most difficult public diplomacy and scientific challenges here. However, with at least a 'foot in the door' on this issue, post has stepped up its outreach on climate change policy, and we urge continued Washington help to address French skepticism. End Summary.

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French Show Interest  
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2. (SBU) The Foreign Ministry Spokesman took a question on the Asia-Pacific Partnership and the Embassy's EST Section exchanged comments with the French agency charged with inter-ministerial coordination of climate change about the Partnership. The spokesman referred to the Partnership as "an interesting regional initiative that demonstrates growing global interest on the question of (climate) change." A senior official in the inter-ministerial body charged with coordinating climate change told EST counselor that "the impression we get is that this new partnership is a valuable collaboration program on the full range of clean and low carbon technologies...that will aim to improve their diffusion and development." This official also mentioned that the French approach to climate change similarly includes heavy doses of energy technology research. Supporting this research, he noted French participation in U.S.-led technology partnerships, and gave as instances the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy, GEN IV, and the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum. French officials seek to learn more about the Asia-Pacific Partnership in the months ahead.

3. (SBU) Unfortunately, the French official response and the media at the same time dwelled on whether the U.S. had designed the Partnership to replace or complement the Kyoto Protocol, and in either case, remarked that the initiative does not address the urgency or immediacy of the issue. The French highlighted their position that technological solutions alone (i.e., their view of the U.S. view) are insufficient to meet carbon emission reduction needs. They say mandatory emissions controls remain necessary to force the marketplace to undertake meaningful, urgent change. One liberal French daily noted in its commentary on the Partnership that the U.S., tired of being regarded as an eternal skeptic on the subject of climate change, has decided to take a more active stand in the field. Regrettably, one of the Partnership's major features - the 'roping in' of two of the largest producers of greenhouse gases India and China into a scheme, even a voluntary one -- received scant treatment in either the official or media commentary.

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Spreading the Word  
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4. (SBU) The Embassy has intensified its efforts to blunt criticism of U.S. climate policies. CEQ's Jim Connaughton, DOE's Bob Marlay and a number of other U.S. officials over the past year personally supported this campaign. When U.S. climate officials visit Paris to participate in international events, the Embassy seeks their participation in press events or roundtables on U.S. climate policy. Embassy, Consulate and American Presence Post officers are also on the climate change march. Ambassadorial Op-Ed pieces have received prominent placement, and Post will be placing a new OpEd on the Partnership. We also urge continued or stepped up visits by U.S. officials in the coming months that will include a significant program of public affairs outreach. We have

invited Bob Marlay to return to Paris in early December to brief senior officials and influential opinion-makers on the U.S. Climate Technology Program at the annual Passages Forum, the would-be 'Davos' for sustainable development that this year will focus on energy and climate. The Paris-based French-American Foundation/Comite Francais has proposed a yearlong series of seminars on Global Warming and Energy starting in the fall, which the Mission will support with a Public Diplomacy grant. U.S. speakers will be welcomed to participate on a variety of policy and technical topics. Another event, the Michelin Bibendum Challenge (an exposition and symposium on the latest automobile technologies that not only improve road safety but also protect the environment) will be held in Paris in June 2006. These are but a few of the many international events at which the U.S. can advance understanding of its climate policies.

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Messages that Work; Messages that Don,t  
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15. (SBU) In France, aside from a handful of government officials and researchers, there remains a fundamental lack of understanding of the U.S. perspective on climate change. While thanks in large part to the publicity associated with the G-8 many in France understand that the U.S. acknowledges anthropogenic effects on the climate, the French do not believe the U.S. Government considers the climate "urgent" or "a priority." Despite Embassy efforts, many French continue, however, to think that the U.S. remains "out-of-step" with the rest of the world on climate questions. As the U.S. is perceived as a wealthy society, U.S. arguments that implementing Kyoto would negatively affect our economy fall on deaf ears. In fact, we're seen as concerned only about our bottom line, not the global problem of climate change. (In France, the logic, used to explain U.S. non-acceptance of Kyoto is often given as economic greed and environmental irresponsibility.)

16. (SBU) Emphasis on and more detailed examples of climate friendly work we are doing and accomplishing now, such as those outlined by Connaughton during his recent DVC with posts, are useful for the Embassy to bring to the attention of the French public. Pictures of actual transformational energy projects (such as 'FutureGen' or 'FreedomCar') with accompanying text would be helpful for placement and use in presentations. The picture of the President inaugurating the hydrogen gas station in Washington last year is a particularly potent image. Similarly, illustrations of examples of the many areas where the U.S. is succeeding in cutting back emissions would graphically demonstrate our successes. As we understand that the U.S. maintains certain mandatory controls on emissions in certain industrial sectors, we believe elaboration of these would prove informative to the French public. As regards the new Asia-Pacific Partnership, we should focus attention on the fact that it brings in the two largest GHG emitters in the developing world without whose cooperation no climate strategy will be effective. We should keep interest in the Partnership alive by publicizing its milestones.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: The stereotype image of the U.S. has become that we are "the great polluter." This image can be changed and is in fact changing. We think French officials and media will continue to be receptive to U.S. presentations and information on U.S. climate policies and efforts to develop transformational energy technologies. Efforts to 'publicize' U.S. policies before, during, and after the G-8 were welcomed, if not published immediately. Last week's announcement of the Asia-Pacific Partnership took French officials and the media by surprise, but they certainly took note of it. We think we are on the right track and seek Washington's continued assistance in the follow-through. We especially welcome U.S. policymakers (Dobriansky, Connaughton, Watson, Marlay, et alia) to help us press home our brief. End Comment.

STAPLETON